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## MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC IN NIGERIA – FUNCTIONS AND FORMATION

**Abstract:** Liturgy is the source and summit of the life of the Church. Being an inevitable part of this liturgy, the liturgy music serves the dual purpose of God's glorification and man's sanctification. It is the duty of the ministers of liturgical music to ensure that this purpose is achieved in any liturgical gathering. They cannot do this without understanding and diligent carrying out their specific roles in the liturgy. We shall look at the various functions of the individual ministers of liturgical music in Nigeria. Among the ministers mentioned here are the faithful, clergy, cantor, psalmist, schola cantorum or choir and organist.

**Keywords:** liturgy of the Church, church music, liturgical music, ministers of liturgical music, formation, the Church in Nigeria, liturgical music in Nigeria.

Liturgy is the most supreme and efficacious action of the Church and

[...] each liturgical celebration is a synthesis of the entire history of salvation and the fullest participation in the life of God on earth<sup>1</sup>.

This is why the Church places a high premium on liturgical music which is inseparably associated with her liturgy. In Nigeria, the ministers of liturgical music are zealous to execute the different duties assigned to them but the main problem is lack of the basic knowledge of liturgy and sacred music. As zeal without knowledge is dangerous, it becomes imperative to address this issue through frequent programmes aimed at the liturgical, musical and spiritual formation of these ministers. With proper formation, beginning at the early stages of human development,

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<sup>1</sup> B. MİGUT. *The Liturgical Perspective of Theology*. "Roczniki Teologiczne" 65:2018 z. 8 s. 63.

they understand, appreciate and play their specific roles effectively which, in turn, greatly promotes the liturgical life of the Church.

## 1. FUNCTIONS OF THE MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

The Sacred Congregation of Rites is clear on the fact that no liturgical action is a purely private action. Every liturgical action is rather “[...] a celebration of the Church as a society composed of different orders and ministries”<sup>2</sup>. Here, liturgy and liturgical music could be compared to a symphonic orchestra where each instrumentalist has a specific role. Concentrating on his own line of musical notes, he may sometimes be required to observe a pause or to play solo and at other times, to play in unison with every other instrument. No single instrument plays all the music and all the time. In the communal celebration of the liturgy, there is also a clear division of functions to be performed by each minister<sup>3</sup>. We shall now look at the various functions of the individual ministers of liturgical music bearing in mind that

[...] in liturgical celebrations each one, minister or layperson, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to that office by the nature of the rite and principles of liturgy<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.1. THE FAITHFUL

In the past when one asked “Who celebrates?” the answer was “the priest”. Since Vatican II, however, the answer is “the community”. In the past when one asked “Who sings?” the answer was “the choir”. Today, after Vatican II, the answer must be “the community”... It is, therefore, the whole people of God who participate in liturgical song and music. We may even affirm that it is the only participant, since all who have a part in the music or song of the liturgy belong to the people of God... Likewise, the whole people sing, but each participates according to his or her charism and in a way that enhances the beauty and balance of the celebration<sup>5</sup>.

In line with the citation above, K. Harmon is strongly convinced that

[...] the most important ministers of music are the members of the assembly for it is they who, as Body of Christ, enact the rite<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES: *Eucharisticum Mysterium* [EM] p. 3d.

<sup>3</sup> I. PAWLAK. *Muzyka liturgiczna po Soborze Watykańskim II w świetle dokumentów Kościoła*. Lublin 2000 s. 224.

<sup>4</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [SC] p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> L. DEISS. *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century*. Collegeville 1996 s. 27-29.

<sup>6</sup> K. HARMON. *The Ministry of Music: Singing the Paschal Mystery*. Collegeville 2004 s. 14.

This is the major reason for the insistence on the active participation of the faithful in liturgy. And that is also why musical decisions concerning the kind and amount of music to be used in the liturgy must be guided by a pastoral criterion based on its suitability to the needs of the faithful who sing it<sup>7</sup>. While remaining part of the assembly, other ministers of liturgical music exercise their responsibilities in the service of the assembly<sup>8</sup>. They support the entire assembly to voice its song of praise to God by way of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons and other songs<sup>9</sup>.

In Nigeria, the solemn form of the Eucharistic celebration is mostly preferred in the majority of the parishes on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and the faithful fully and actively participate in the singing. In a lively manner, they unite their voices in responding to the greetings and prayers of the celebrant and other ministers. Conversant with the Ordinary parts of the Mass that belong to them and the procession songs for the entrance, communion and dismissal, they happily sing together with the choir. Even, they sometimes add dancing steps during the offertory procession depending on the nature of the song. Confirming this idea, an Igbo author wrote:

[...] the Nigerian Eucharistic celebration could be described as a moving liturgy, filled with active participations by those gathered for the worship, in forms of dancing, singing, clapping, gospel and offertory processions, and a lively homily. All these factors make the Eucharistic celebrations lively<sup>10</sup>.

## 1.2. THE CLERGY

In terms of symphonic orchestra, the work of the clergy could be likened to that of the conductor as A.C. Dorner and A.M. Mongoven lucidly illustrated:

The presider at liturgy is not unlike a conductor. His orchestra is the entire worshipping community. He unifies, leads, sets the tempo, interprets and determines the style of celebration. If he is to be a successful conductor, his work must also include planning, rehearsing and study. A good presider is the *sine qua non* of good liturgical celebration<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> M.T. WINTER. *Why Sing? Toward a Theology of Catholic Church Music*. Washington D.C 1984 s. 179.

<sup>8</sup> L. DEISS. *Visions of Liturgy and Music* s. 38.

<sup>9</sup> CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *Guidelines for Composers of Liturgical Music*. Ottawa 2014 p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> U. ABA. *The Reception of the Second Vatican Council's Liturgical Reforms in Nigeria (Nsukka Diocese)*. Zurich 2016 s. 177.

<sup>11</sup> R.C. DORNER, A.M. MONGOVEN. *The Celebrant Must Be There*. In: *Music in Catholic Worship – the NPM Commentary*. Ed. V.C. Funk. Washington D.C 1983 s. 55-56.

On the highest rung of the hierarchical ladder of the clergy is the bishop who is the moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole of liturgical life, being entrusted as the chief steward with the mysteries of God in his diocese<sup>12</sup>. According to the Bishops' Conference of USA, a bishop can promote liturgical music in various ways such as

[...] encouraging sung participation by his own example; by his attention to the practice of liturgical music in the parishes and communities of his diocese, especially in his own cathedral church; by his promotion of the continuing musical education and formation of clergy and musicians; and by his careful attention to the musical training of future priests and deacons<sup>13</sup>.

In recent times, many Nigerian bishops are paying greater attention and manifesting their readiness to provide both moral and financial support towards the development of liturgical music in their dioceses in line with the letter written to Cardinal Pizzardo by Msgr. G.B. Montini at the instance of Pope Pius XII on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Pius X's *motu proprio*. The letter partly reads:

[...] since Sacred music is an integral part of the liturgy, the Ordinaries shall give all their support, including financial – this being of the greatest usefulness to the Catholic apostolate<sup>14</sup>.

Having been sent to study musicology in Poland, the researcher is a typical example of the efforts of the bishops.

Together with the bishops, many Nigerian priests are making strenuous efforts to promote liturgical music in the various areas of their pastoral ministry through financial assistance, physical presence or moral encouragement. They are up to date with the regulations and directives of the Music Commission and help to enforce them in their area of apostolate. Their unceasing paternal support bears abundant fruits in the outstanding performance of the various ministers of liturgical music in their parish or institutions. However, not all priests do this. In some parishes, for instance, some parish priests manifest significant lack of interest in the affairs of the choir. They do not appreciate the organists and other instrumentalists, the cantor, the psalmist and other ministers of the liturgy even when their services are rendered free of charge. In the face of this lamentable situation,

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<sup>12</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM] p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *Sing to the Lord: Music in Catholic Worship*. Chicago 2007 p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> R.F. HAYBURN. *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* Minnesota 1979 s. 96.

E. Umezinwa humbly calls on such priests to change their nonchalant, discouraging and unsupportive attitudes towards the choir and liturgical music as a whole<sup>15</sup>.

### 1.3. THE CANTOR

The function of a cantor both as a singer and leader of congregational song is multifaceted. As a singer, he fulfils the role of the *schola* or choir where there is none, singing independently in alternation or dialogue with the assembly. If there is a *schola* or choir, he sings together with them<sup>16</sup>. As a leader, he fulfils the role of a director and a conductor. Intoning songs, he directs the singing of the faithful and co-ordinates it with the singing of the celebrant, *schola* or choir<sup>17</sup>. Historically, the introduction of harmonized music by the choir contributed to the decline in the ministry of a cantor whose duties, as a result, naturally fell to the conductor or the choirmaster<sup>18</sup>. This explains why the ministry of a cantor in Nigeria is not so popular. Every parish has one or more choirs and the conductor or the choirmaster of the choir automatically takes up the specific function of a cantor. During the weekday Masses, in the absence of the choir, a member or members of the choir in attendance assume the duty of a cantor on voluntary basis. Today, however, a few dioceses are beginning to introduce the ministry of a cantor who will co-ordinate the singing of a huge assembly always gathered at the diocesan liturgical celebrations.

### 1.4. THE PSALMIST

As the name implies, the psalmist or «cantor of the psalm» has the responsibility of singing the responsorial psalm after the first reading and leading the faithful in singing the response or refrain. It is not the function of the organist<sup>19</sup> as is obtainable in most places in Europe and America. For cogent reasons, the responsorial psalm which is meant always to be sung can be recited and the best position for it is usually at the pulpit even though it can also be performed in any other place considered suitable. For the psalmist to be able to carry out his function commendably, he must be well prepared musically and liturgically and by way of correct

<sup>15</sup> E.C. UMEZINWA. *The Changing Face of Catholic Liturgical Music in Igboland*. "Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts" 7:2010 s. 219.

<sup>16</sup> I. PAWLAK. *Muzyka liturgiczna po Soborze Watykańskim II* s. 238.

<sup>17</sup> A. FILABER. *Prawodawstwo muzyki kościelnej*. Warszawa 2011 s. 116.

<sup>18</sup> W. SHEBBEARE. *Cantor*. In: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03306a.htm>> [accessed on 25.03.2020.]

<sup>19</sup> Z. JANIEC. *Jak godnie celebrować Mszę Świętą?* Lublin 2020 s. 68.

pronunciation and diction<sup>20</sup>. Having personally and prayerfully internalized the message of God's word in the psalm in relationship with the readings, according to K. Harmon, he must be able to communicate this message to the assembly in his tone of voice, body language, facial expression and gestures<sup>21</sup>.

In Nigeria, a psalmist who is often a member of the choir performs the functions as described above. Being a member of the choir, it is usually the practice to rehearse with them the part he is to sing, especially the refrain. The choir then helps the entire congregation to grab it quickly during the celebration. In the past, though rare now, it was even the tradition in some parishes to do some rehearsal with the people gathered in the church a few minutes before the beginning of the celebration. In some places in the diocese, it is observed that the responsorial psalm is harmonized by more than one voice and accompanied by musical instruments. According to Z. Janiec, this is part of the liturgical irregularities running contrary to the tradition of the Catholic Church based on liturgical principles. Reiterating these principles in his book on how to celebrate the Holy Mass worthily, he clearly stated that the responsorial psalm should be rendered by one person in one voice without musical accompaniment and should neither be replaced by other songs nor be forced into borrowed melodies like Christmas carol songs etc. In accordance with liturgical regulations, he furthermore mentioned that one can choose to sing another psalm altogether rather than cut the number of the verses of any responsorial psalm<sup>22</sup>.

These principles should be explained out to the psalmists. This will be better organized and coordinated if individuals who volunteer to sing the responsorial psalm, at the parish or diocesan level, can be formed into an association with occasional training and formation. There is not yet such an association in most of the dioceses.

### 1.5. THE SCHOLA OR THE CHOIR

Schola is an esteemed abbreviation of the Latin *Schola cantorum* – school of singers. *Musicam Sacram*<sup>23</sup> considers the liturgical ministry of *Schola Cantorum* or the choir of great importance, ensuring

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<sup>20</sup> I. PAWLAK. *Muzyka liturgiczna w polskim czasopiśmiennictwie katolickim po Soborze Watykańskim II*. In: *Prasa i książka religijna. Materiały z IV Warmińskich Dni Duszpasterskich, Olsztyn 27-29.08.1987*. Olsztyn 1990 s. 102.

<sup>21</sup> K. HARMON. *The Ministry of Music* s. 50.

<sup>22</sup> Z. JANIEC. *Jak godnie celebrować Mszę Świętą?* s. 67-68.

<sup>23</sup> SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL. *Musicam Sacram* [MS].

[...] the proper performance of the parts which belong to it, according to the different kinds of music sung, and to encourage the active participation of the faithful in the singing<sup>24</sup>.

As part of the whole congregation, a *schola* intones songs and sings in alternation or dialogue with the people. It can also sing independently, without the external participation of the faithful. While *schola cantorum* focuses primarily on Gregorian chants and other forms of liturgical monodies, a choir principally performs polyphonic music. This is the major distinguishing mark between them, otherwise they perform more or less the same functions. In the absence of a *schola*, the choir fully takes over its tasks.

In Nigeria just as in Africa as a whole, choir ministry is very strong and more common than the *schola*. Describing his experience about choir ministry in Africa, L. Deiss wrote:

In certain Third World countries, especially in Africa, new choirs have sprung up out of communities like spring jonquils in a field. They dress themselves in dazzling colours, they rejoice and dance to the rhythm of their drums, they are given to inventing new songs in their tribal languages: a real celebration of joy! Sometimes the same community has at its disposal several choirs, each of which animates a particular Mass. In some missionary settings there is no problem about finding choirs and songs: the only problem is in directing the superabundance of all these resources<sup>25</sup>.

The types of choir in different parishes and dioceses include: adult or parish choir, school choir, youth choir and children choir. Choir practices/rehearsals twice or thrice a week and diocesan singing competitions which usually take place once in two or three years help to improve the general performance of the choirs. According to I. Pawlak, there are three ways in which a choir can participate in the liturgy of the mass. It can perform alone or in dialogue with the remaining part of the assembly. It can also sing simultaneously with the people<sup>26</sup> as Nigerian choirs more often do, supporting and enhancing the song by the addition of harmonization to the melody sung by the worshipping assembly.

Any discourse about the choir cannot end without a mention of the choir-master who, as Haberl would say “[...] is the very soul of the choir, animating it and governing it”<sup>27</sup>. His position is extremely important because

<sup>24</sup> MS 19.

<sup>25</sup> L. DEISS. *Visions of Liturgy and Music* s. 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> For more details, see I. PAWLAK. *Muzyka liturgiczna po Soborze Watykańskim II* s. 260.

<sup>27</sup> F.X. HABERL. *Magister Choralis – A Theoretical and Practical Manual of Gregorian Chant*. New York 1892 s. 223.

[...] in the final analysis a choir is generally as good as, and no better than, its choirmaster<sup>28</sup>.

There is no gainsaying the fact that any choirmaster who is not just a music expert, but also well-grounded in liturgical formation is a big asset in any diocese or parish. The influence and expertise of such choirmasters

[...] are a crucial resource for the broader development of the church's liturgical life. By their example, collaboration and sharing of talents, such musicians assist and support other lesser-trained or part-time musicians in parishes and smaller communities<sup>29</sup>.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria, such trained and professional choirmasters are hard to come by. In many dioceses, there are no parish choirmasters who are music graduates. Musically talented individuals become choirmasters only by dint of personal hard work and effort. One must praise the sincere efforts and diligence of many of these choirmasters which bear abundant fruits in different dioceses. But just like the choristers, most of them are also swimming in the ocean of ignorance as far as liturgical music is concerned and this, while affecting their job, invariably and drastically affects also the liturgy. Even worse is the situation in some rural areas where some choirs are like sheep without any shepherd at all.

#### 1.6. THE ORGANIST

The function of the organist is basically twofold: accompaniment and solo performance. As regards accompaniment, R. Terry holds the view that

[...] the function of the organ is to accompany the choir, not to lead it; to embellish the singing, not to smother it<sup>30</sup>.

While the organist can accompany the singing of the choir, schola, cantor, psalmist and the people, he may not do so when the celebrant or a minister has got to proclaim aloud some parts of the mass (for example, preface) by virtue of his role<sup>31</sup>. Before accompanying the singing, the organist ought to prepare the people to join by introducing the song in a suitable key with proper rhythm, tempo and voice selection. He also does the same for the celebrant before he intones a song to be sung in common or in dialogue with the people (for example, Glory, Credo, Our Father etc.)<sup>32</sup>. This ministerial function of the organ requires that both “[...] knowledge

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<sup>28</sup> G. HYSLOP. *Since Singing Is So Good a Thing*. Nairobi 1964 s. 6.

<sup>29</sup> CANTICANOVA PUBLICATIONS. *The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music* p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> R.R. TERRY. *Catholic Church Music*. London 1907 s. 84.

<sup>31</sup> MS 64.

<sup>32</sup> A. FILABER. *Prawodawstwo muzyki kościelnej* s. 117.

and technique must be perfect. Mediocrity is unforgivable<sup>33</sup>. Solo performance on the organ either by way of improvisation or by selecting from a repertoire is allowed at the entrance, offertory, communion, and at the dismissal of the Mass.

Due to the high cost of building a pipe organ, electronic organs are mostly in vogue in Nigeria. Nonetheless, because of its importance and the difference it makes in liturgy, it is recommendable for the dioceses to source for finance in order to procure, at least, a small-scale pipe organ and train a professional to handle it for liturgical celebrations at the cathedral. Ordinarily, such professionally trained organists for liturgical music are very rare. One can see a few talented individuals who have struggled on their own to learn and play the organ. Unlike in Europe, Asia or America where organists are professionally employed and earn official salary or stipend for their job, most Nigerian organists volunteer to assist the choir they belong to or any other choir that needs their assistance just for the love of it and with some sense of sacrifice.

While one must acknowledge that a good number of them are doing well considering their given circumstances, it is also undoubtable that majority are found wanting. With their low level of skill acquisition and ignorance of the concept of liturgy coupled with lack of serious practice, when these amateurs play by way of improvisation, their style leaves much to be desired as far as liturgy is concerned. This is why it is also very exigent, as in the case of choirs and choirmasters, to intermittently organize musical programs and workshops specifically for organists. Aimed at updating their musical and liturgical knowledge and improving their skills, this will help to upgrade the general standard of organ playing for liturgy as different from playing for entertainment or concert.

## 2. FORMATION OF THE MINISTERS OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

As hinted above, ignorance is a pandemic problem basically affecting the functions of the different ministries of liturgical music in Nigeria. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to engage in ongoing formation of these ministers both on the musical, liturgical and spiritual levels for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

### 2.1. MUSICAL AND LITURGICAL FORMATION

In varying degrees and according to their different positions and ranks, basic instructions both on sacred music and on sacred liturgy (that is, musical and liturgical formation) must be inseparably given to the clergy and the faithful as

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<sup>33</sup> L. DEISS. *Visions of Liturgy and Music* s. 54.

ministers of liturgical music<sup>34</sup>. And for the purpose of this integral formation which is necessary to their Christian life, seminars and workshops should be frequently organized.

#### 2.1.1. Basic Instructions to Lay Ministers

Apart from the occasional seminars and workshops which different dioceses in Nigeria organize, The Sacred Congregation of Rites recommends that each diocese should found an institute or school of voice and organ where organists, choir masters, singers, and even instrumentalists can be given good instruction. It is better still if two or more dioceses could join forces to establish such an institute to which parish priests or rectors of Churches must not neglect to send qualified candidates with necessary encouragement to their studies<sup>35</sup>. Unfortunately, many dioceses in Nigeria are yet to do so.

Just as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who became one of the greatest composers of all ages and his elder sister, Maria Anna Mozart, began their musical and academic education from the family with their father, Leopold, as the primary teacher, it will be good to emphasize here that instructions concerning liturgy and music are supposed to have started already from the Christian family as “[...] the natural and first school of Christian education”<sup>36</sup>. It is then to be continued not only in the mission schools at the primary and secondary levels, but also in the chaplaincies attached to the various institutions of higher learning. From learning how to participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass and other pious exercises from the parents, children graduate, at their youthful age, to a more theoretical and practical knowledge of sacred liturgy and sacred music<sup>37</sup>. And as no one can give what he or she has not, the teachers at these different stages of learning must themselves be expectedly and sufficiently knowledgeable in these fields.

As a matter of fact, all the faithful are required to possess a certain degree of knowledge of the sacred liturgy and sacred chant<sup>38</sup>. Sometimes, unfortunately, we tend to forget to provide some space for instruction in these matters to the general liturgical assembly which is even the primary minister of liturgical music. To this effect, pastors of souls must consider it a matter of urgent necessity to map out some days for seminars during the course of the year and invite experts to enlighten the entire faithful about the basics of sacred liturgy and sacred music. This will

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<sup>34</sup> SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES: *De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia* [MSSL] p. 104.

<sup>35</sup> MSSL 115.

<sup>36</sup> MSSL 105.

<sup>37</sup> MSSL 105-108.

<sup>38</sup> MSSL 109.

surely promote their active participation in no small way and help them to differentiate good liturgy from bad.

### 2.1.2. Basic Instructions in the Houses of Formation

If a certain degree of knowledge of the sacred liturgy and sacred music is required of all the faithful, *young men who aspire to the priesthood* must achieve a complete and sound instruction on the whole of the sacred liturgy and of sacred chant<sup>39</sup>.

It can rightly be said that Our predecessor of immortal memory, St. Pius X, made as it were the highest contribution to the reform and renewal of sacred music<sup>40</sup>.

This is a written testimony of Pope Pius XII in his encyclical on sacred music, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*, concerning the unsurpassable contribution of his predecessor to liturgical music. It must, however, be borne in mind that this great reform which benefitted the Church immeasurably did not start from his years as a Supreme Pontiff. It was rather a reform that was dear to his heart from his early youth as testified by Hayburn:

The reforms which he undertook were the result of his own personal experience as a seminarian, an assistant pastor, a pastor, a seminary rector, a bishop, and the cardinal-patriarch of Venice<sup>41</sup>.

With first-hand experience, therefore, he fully understood the great necessity of early musical education for children and young people and more so, for seminarians preparing for the priesthood. And based on his 'legal code of sacred music,' all the popes who succeeded him have emphasized the importance of the study of sacred music in the houses of formation under well-trained teachers<sup>42</sup>.

In many of our seminaries, it is sad to note that the study of sacred music as a course is almost absent. Even as part of liturgy, much is not said about it. As with seminarians, so it is with both men and women religious as well as members of secular institutes. Their superiors, like the bishops of the dioceses, must ensure that sufficient knowledge of the theory and practice of sacred liturgy and sacred music is provided to all the members of the communities, from the time of probation and the novitiate<sup>43</sup>. Efforts must be made so that music programmes or membership into the choir are not experienced as obnoxious or a punishment as is the case in

<sup>39</sup> MSSL 109.

<sup>40</sup> PIUS XII. *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* [MSD] p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> R.F. HAYBURN. *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music* s. 195.

<sup>42</sup> MSD 75; PIUS XI: *Divini Cultus* [DC] p. 1; SC 115.

<sup>43</sup> MSSL 110.

some of the houses of formation. As the music director in a minor seminary for eight years, the researcher discovered, for instance, that the majority of the young seminarians freely joined the choir when they knew that doing so would not deny them much of other important activities like studies and sports. While many of the young boys and girls in these formation houses are lovers of music and would wish to improve their musical skills, the music programme or choir practices must be planned in such a way as to catch their interest and sustain their commitment. And with the ample opportunities they also have in these houses of formation to exercise the functions of the different ministers of liturgical music – organist, psalmist, choristers etc., they are better equipped to contribute to the development of liturgical music wherever they find themselves in future.

Part of the reasons why sacred music is not formally studied in the seminaries as mentioned above is the lack of well-trained teachers. But if in line with the exhortations of the Holy See, seminarians who are musically talented are sent to respectable institutes of sacred music for studies, they will come back as musical experts to “[...] preserve the heritage of sacred music and genuinely promote the new forms of sacred singing”<sup>44</sup> as the Fathers of Vatican II Council intended. And with such expertise, they will help not only to promote the teaching and learning of sacred music in the seminaries and other Catholic institutes and schools, but also to upgrade its practice in the cathedrals and parishes.

## 2.2. SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Besides musical formation, suitable liturgical and spiritual formation must also be given to the members of the choir, in such a way that the proper performance of their liturgical role will not only enhance the beauty of the celebration and be an excellent example for the faithful, but will bring spiritual benefit to the choir-members themselves<sup>45</sup>.

As instructions on sacred liturgy and sacred music are inseparable and have been emphasized above, we wish to underline here the need for spiritual formation of the ministers of liturgical music. Though *Musicam Sacram* addresses the choristers directly in the above citation, the message can, however, be extended to other ministers. To whom much is given, much is also expected (Lk 12,48). To participate in the liturgy as a minister is a great privilege which goes with some responsibilities in terms of moral and spiritual comportment. Whether as the presider, or a member of the choir, or an organist, or a psalmist etc., ministers of the

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<sup>44</sup> MS 52.

<sup>45</sup> MS 24.

liturgy and liturgical music owe the faithful a shining example of good conduct. The Sacred Congregation of Rites puts it succinctly:

All those who take part in sacred music, as composers, organists, choir directors, singers, or musicians should above all give good example of Christian life to the rest of the faithful because they directly or indirectly participate in the sacred liturgy<sup>46</sup>.

What is more, if they should allow the sacred mysteries they celebrate to permeate and transform them, they can become, by their exemplary lives, agents of evangelization as new members can easily be attracted to join their ministry.

It is the case in some dioceses in Nigeria and it is encouraging that some choirs, in a bid to uplift their spiritual life, organize for themselves spiritual retreats with prayer sessions and spiritual talks. In some places, it takes the form of novena prayers for a day or more. These efforts should be supported by the various ecclesiastical authorities and sometimes, the scope could also be widened to accommodate the participation of other ministers of liturgical music in the parish or institution. In their guidelines for ministers of music, the diocese of Saginaw in USA has it thus:

[...] the pastor/pastoral administrator or music director might consider offering a yearly day of reflection for musicians which would be an avenue for spiritual enrichment and an opportunity for them to reflect upon their ministry<sup>47</sup>.

Obviously, the clergy who, by the grace of holy orders, ought to give better example as ministers participate in ongoing spiritual formation too. Apart from partaking in the retreats they moderate for the faithful, they also have the obligation to undergo their annual retreat as canonically stipulated<sup>48</sup>. And their monthly recollections as well are geared towards the same end. These avenues for spiritual formation for the ministers of liturgical music – whether as laity or clergy – complement the spiritual nourishment derivable from the active participation and worthy celebration of the liturgy.

## CONCLUSION

Liturgy is the source and summit of the life of the Church. Being an inseparable part of this liturgy, liturgy music serves the dual purpose of God's glorification and man's sanctification. It is the duty of the ministers of liturgical music to ensure that

<sup>46</sup> MSSL 97.

<sup>47</sup> CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW. *Guidelines and Protocols for Liturgical Ministers* s. 43. <[https://saginaw.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/EMHC\\_final\\_from\\_Tim.20140218-GLM.pdf](https://saginaw.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/EMHC_final_from_Tim.20140218-GLM.pdf)> [accessed on 2.12.2020].

<sup>48</sup> CCL 276 § 2 °4.

this purpose is achieved in any liturgical gathering. They cannot do this without understanding and diligently carrying out their specific roles in liturgy. As lack of basic knowledge of sacred liturgy and sacred music is a key problem for most people in the Nigerian Church, we tried to summarize in this article the basic functions of the ministers of liturgical music and to explain that frequent programmes of musical, liturgical and spiritual formation at all stages of human development are necessary to enable these ministers to fully understand these functions and be ready to execute them effectively to the glory of God and sanctification of humanity.

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### SZAFARZE MUZYKI LITURGICZNEJ W NIGERII – FUNKCJE I FORMACJA

**Streszczenie:** Liturgia jest źródłem i szczytem życia Kościoła. Będąc nieodłączną częścią tej liturgii, muzyka liturgiczna służy podwójnemu celowi uwielbienia Boga i uświęcenia człowieka. Obowiązkiem szafarzy muzyki liturgicznej jest zapewnienie realizacji tego celu na każdym zgromadzeniu liturgicznym. Nie mogą oni tego zrobić bez zrozumienia i rzetelnego wypełniania swoich specyficznych ról w liturgii. Przyjrzymy się różnym funkcjom poszczególnych szafarzy muzyki liturgicznej w Nigerii. Wśród ministrów, o których tutaj mowa, są: wierni, duchowni, kantor, psalmista, schola lub chór i organista.

**Słowa kluczowe:** liturgia Kościoła, muzyka kościelna, muzyka liturgiczna, szafarze muzyki liturgicznej, formacja, Kościół w Nigerii, muzyka liturgiczna w Nigerii.